construction without resort to a surface treatment (e.g., corona discharge) or the formation of microvoids.

Applicants also note that the Yamamoto et al. reference does not appear to disclose the simultaneous formation of (a) a melt-processable base layer and (b) an ink-receptive layer over the base layer. It therefore appears that the Examiner has selected the Yamamoto et al. reference simply because of its disclosure of a blend of a polyolefin and polyethylene oxide. That disclosure, by itself, however, cannot support a rejection of Applicants' claims, as it ignores a key aspect of the Yamamoto et al. disclosure, namely, the "elution of a part of polyethylene oxide with water" in the process of making the paper-like thermoplastic film. Indeed, the elution step appears to be one of the key steps in the formation of a rough surface and internal voids of Yamamoto et al.'s film.

As the examiner knows, it is improper to choose bits and pieces of the references and combine them, through the hindsight gleaned from reading the applicant's disclosure, to arrive at the claimed invention. The present invention does not rely on topcoating, surface treatment, or a voided microstructure to gain ink receptivity. Accordingly, there is no objective basis for combining Yamamoto et al. and Freedman and, even if those references are combined, they would not result in the present invention, with its *inherently* ink-receptive printable surface.

Accordingly, Applicants ask the Examiner to reconsider his rejection of claims 1-5.

Respectfully submitted,

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To bridge the gap, the Examiner cites Yamamoto et al. and states that it "teaches a polyolefin and polyethylene oxide (4:10-60 and 9:3-35)," and that, "Freedman and Yamamoto et al. are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor, namely, forming printable polymer films."

Applicants call the Examiner's attention to column 11, lines 9-16, of Freedman, referring to the manufacture of a multilayer facestock. As indicated, "charge D [which forms core layer 52] is pre-selected to allow for good printability (*usually following corona treatment of the formed film*) . . ." (emphasis added). In other words, printability is imparted by a post-extrusion surface treatment, namely, corona discharge. In contrast, and as pointed out in the present application, at page 9, lines 2-7, the ink-receptive substrates of the present invention "are referred to as being 'inherently' ink-receptive, or ink jet printable, because the substrate surface structure is engineered to be receptive to an ink medium *without subsequent topcoating, treating (e.g., corona treating or the like), and without depending on a voided or porous microstructure.*" (Emphasis added.)

Similarly, the Yamamoto et al. reference, refers to its construction as having "a surface which is very finely rough and hence has a surface similar to paper which has properties making it suitable for use in graphic art" (column 2, lines 55-60; see also Figs. 1-6, referring to a film provided with a great number of minute voids and having a surface of a fine or finer roughness). This is in contrast to the method of the present invention, which provides ink-receptive substrates that are "inherently ink-receptive . . . [and] avoid the need for topcoating or reliance on a voided microstructure to gain ink receptivity." (Application, page 7, lines 19-21; see also page 7, lines 22-24: "ink-receptive substrates of this invention provide properties of image quality and optics that are superior to those provided by substrates having voided microstructures;" see also page 5, lines 7–page 6, line 5, and page 9, lines 1-13.

Clearly, the present invention is distinguishable over Freedman and Yamamoto et al on this basis: Applicant's method provides an *inherently* ink printable surface in a multilayer